

FORT MONROE, BUILDING 168
Murray Street
Hampton
Hampton County
Virginia

HABS NO. VA-595-F

HFRS
VA
28-HAMP
2F-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HABS
VA
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

Fort Monroe Building 168 HABS No. VA- 595-F

Location: Murray Street, Fort Monroe, Virginia 23651

Present Owner: U. S. Army

Present Use: Warehouse, to be demolished FY 91

Significance: This building was completed in 1921 from a standard Army design for a laundry. It is included in the Fort Monroe National Historic Landmark by virtue of its physical location, but has not been separately nominated to the National Register. According to a HABS inventory carried out in 1987, Building 168 is an anomaly at Fort Monroe because of its frame construction and unusual appearance.

Fort Monroe centers around a masonry fort begun in 1819 and completed in 1834. Most buildings in and around the fort are of brick and date from the 19th century. Architectural styles are generally Colonial Revival. Building 168 does not conform to the architectural character of Fort Monroe.

The HABS inventory assigned this structure a rating of Category IV, resources of little or no historical, architectural or technological importance, and recommended no special preservation. The standard design from which Building 168 was constructed was used at numerous military installations around the country, and an excellent example still stands at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. This is considered important as a building type the Army standardized and used widely.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1921
2. Architect: Unknown. Quartermaster Plans No. 166 & 167.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Army.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: The original laundry was a rectangle with a sawtooth roof, 54'6" X 216" frame construction on a concrete foundation. It was completed 15 June 1921 at a cost of \$44,182.57. Original plans are on file at the Directorate of Installation Support (DIS), Fort Monroe, Virginia.
6. Alterations and additions: The building was converted to a storehouse c. 1960. Small porches at each end were removed and several windows were boarded over. Laundry equipment was removed. At some unknown time, a wing was added to each side of Building 168. These wings are approximately 20 feet in width

B. Historical context: Building 168 was the Post Laundry from 1921 to 1960, and has been used as a warehouse since then. No particular events or persons are connected with the structure. Its importance comes from its status as an example of a standard plan used Army-wide during and just after World War I.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General statement:

1. Architectural character: Building 168 is a frame factory-type design typical of 1920s industrial designs.

2. Condition of fabric: The building has long exceeded its design life, and many structural elements are failing. Portions of the building have been condemned.

B. Description of exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This is a one-story building, 54'6" X 216'. An east wing, 182' X 18', and a west wing, 216' X 20', with a 32' X 18' projection near the southwest corner, were added at an unknown time.

2. Foundations: Concrete piers and footings, depth unknown. There is no basement.

3. Walls: Wood with wooden clapboard siding. Trim is plain or non-existent.

4. Structural system, framing: Wood, beams supported on interior posts. Floor is a concrete slab.

5. Porches, etc.: None. Small shed roofs over doorways. Concrete loading platform on north end.

6. Chimneys: One freestanding cylindrical metal stack on west side.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Double doors on the north, west, and south sides have plain wooden flush doors. Several doorways of various sizes have been boarded over, and some doorways cut at some time since the original construction. Original doors were board and batten, according to plans; these were replaced at some unknown time.

b. Windows: Several styles, sizes and shapes, ranging from six-over-six to six-paned or nine-paned. There are no shutters, nor were they ever present. Trim is flat boards, usually 1" X 4". Many windows, including the rows of six-paned windows in the clerestories, have been boarded over. It also appears that many windows have been replaced at various times.

8. Roof:

a. Shape: The main building has a sawtooth roof, a series of shed roofs running perpendicularly to the main axis of the building. The vertical faces of the sawtooth face north and were once filled with rows of clerestory windows, which could be opened to afford ventilation, undoubtedly necessary in a steam laundry during Tidewater's sauna summers. The side additions have low shed roofs. All are covered with asphalt shingles or roll roofing.

b. Cornice, eaves: There is no cornice, just a strip of flat wood 1" x 4". Eaves are open. Aluminum gutters and downspouts have been installed at an unknown date.

C. Description of interior:

1. Floor plan: The central block is a large open space, as are the wings. Many non-loadbearing partitions have been set up to form offices, special storage rooms, etc. A sketch is attached. There is only one floor, no attic, and no basement.

2. Stairways: None.

3. Floorings: Concrete in the warehouse area, vinyl-asbestos tile over concrete in the offices.

4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Painted gypsum board where present. The ceiling is open in the central area, and a wallboard ceiling has been installed in some of the offices. Some partitions consist of light wood frames with chicken wire stapled across them.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Openings between the main area and the wings have been located on an ad hoc basis, and doors are apparently a selection retrieved from other buildings, representing many different styles. Trim, if present, is a flat board, 1" X 4".

b. Windows: Trim is flat boards of differing widths. Windows vary (see B.7.c.).

6. Decorative features and trim: None. This is a barebones building.

7. Hardware: Limited to doorknobs, hinges, and window catches, apparently either stock items or salvaged from other buildings. Most are brass, and styles vary considerably.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. HVAC system: Modern oil-fired furnace provides steam heat. Window-mounted air conditioners in offices.

b. Lighting: Ceiling-hung fluorescent fixtures in offices. Modern industrial-type drop lamps in warehouse.

c. Plumbing: Bathrooms were upgraded about 1976, modern fixtures.

9. Original furnishings: None.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation; Building 168 sits immediately adjacent to the southern end of Murray Street. A driveway and narrow strip of grass separate it from Patch Road on the south. The building axis runs roughly north-south. The ground is flat and paved all around the structure. An elevated water tank is on the northwest corner, housing units farther to the north, west, and across Patch Road to the south, and a one-story brick warehouse across Murray Street to the east.

2. Historic landscape design: None. There are a few shade trees on the western side of the building.

3. Outbuildings: None.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

- A. Architectural drawings: Original plans dated 1919 are on file at Fort Monroe, as are some drawings of alterations.
- B. Historic views: One photograph c. 1945 is in the DFE Property Book, Design Office, Fort Monroe.
- C. Interviews: Richard Westrich, Chief, Design Branch, Fort Monroe Engineers, 24 August 1990.
- D. Bibliography:
 - 1. Primary and unpublished sources:
 - a. Plans and records on file, Design Office, Fort Monroe Engineers.
 - b. Department of Army Inventory of Fort Monroe Historic Properties, Building 168, Phyllis Sprock, 1980, Fort Monroe Environmental Office.
 - 2. Secondary and published sources:
 - The Architectural Heritage of Fort Monroe, Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1987.
- E. Likely sources not yet investigated: None identified.
- F. Supplemental material: None found.

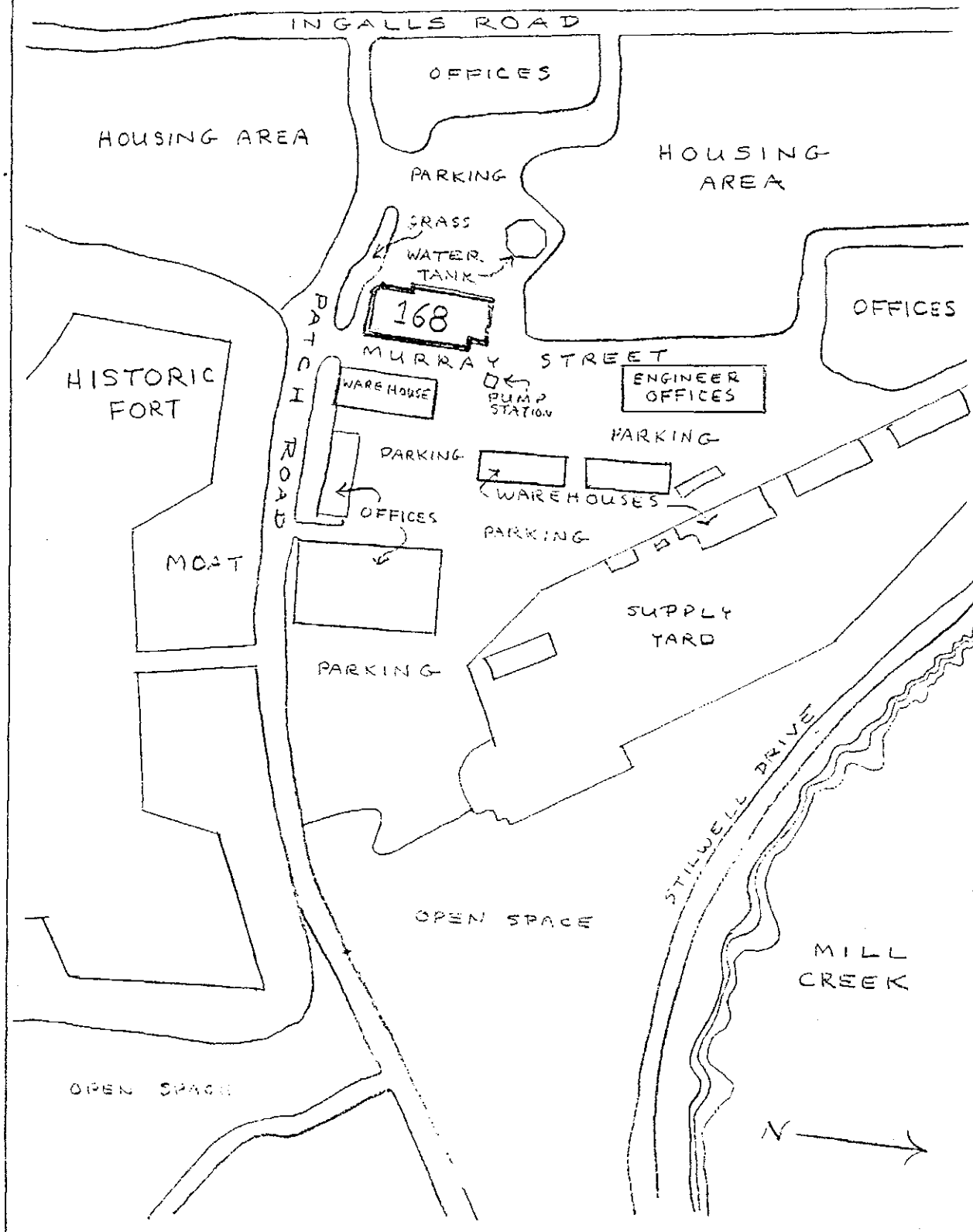
PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

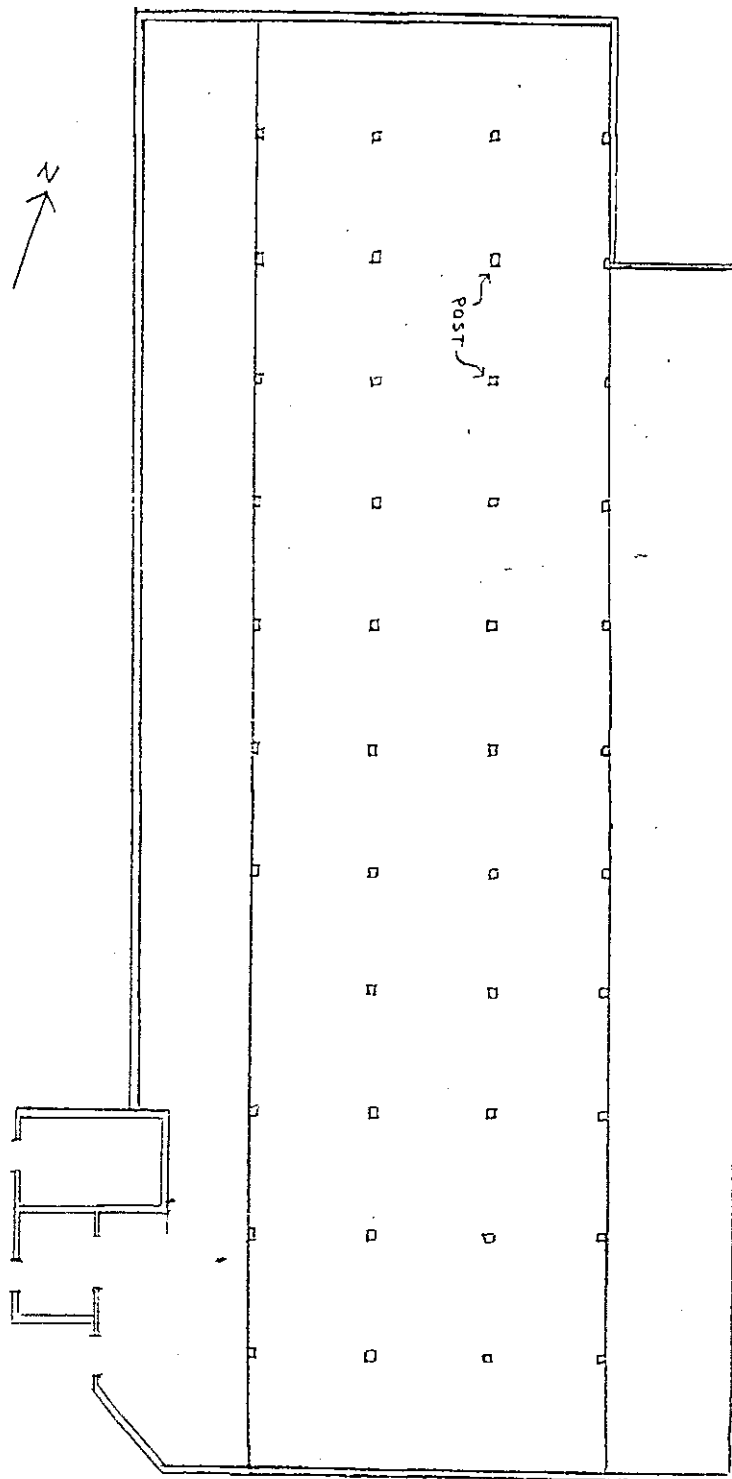
- A. The project calls for demolition of Building 168 by the U.S. Army, Fort Monroe; project FM-168-1410-90.
- B. This record was prepared 20-24 August 1990.

Prepared by: Phyllis C. Sprock
Title: Environmental Officer
Affiliation: Fort Monroe
Date: 24 August 1990

HOUSING AREA

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SKETCH PLAN